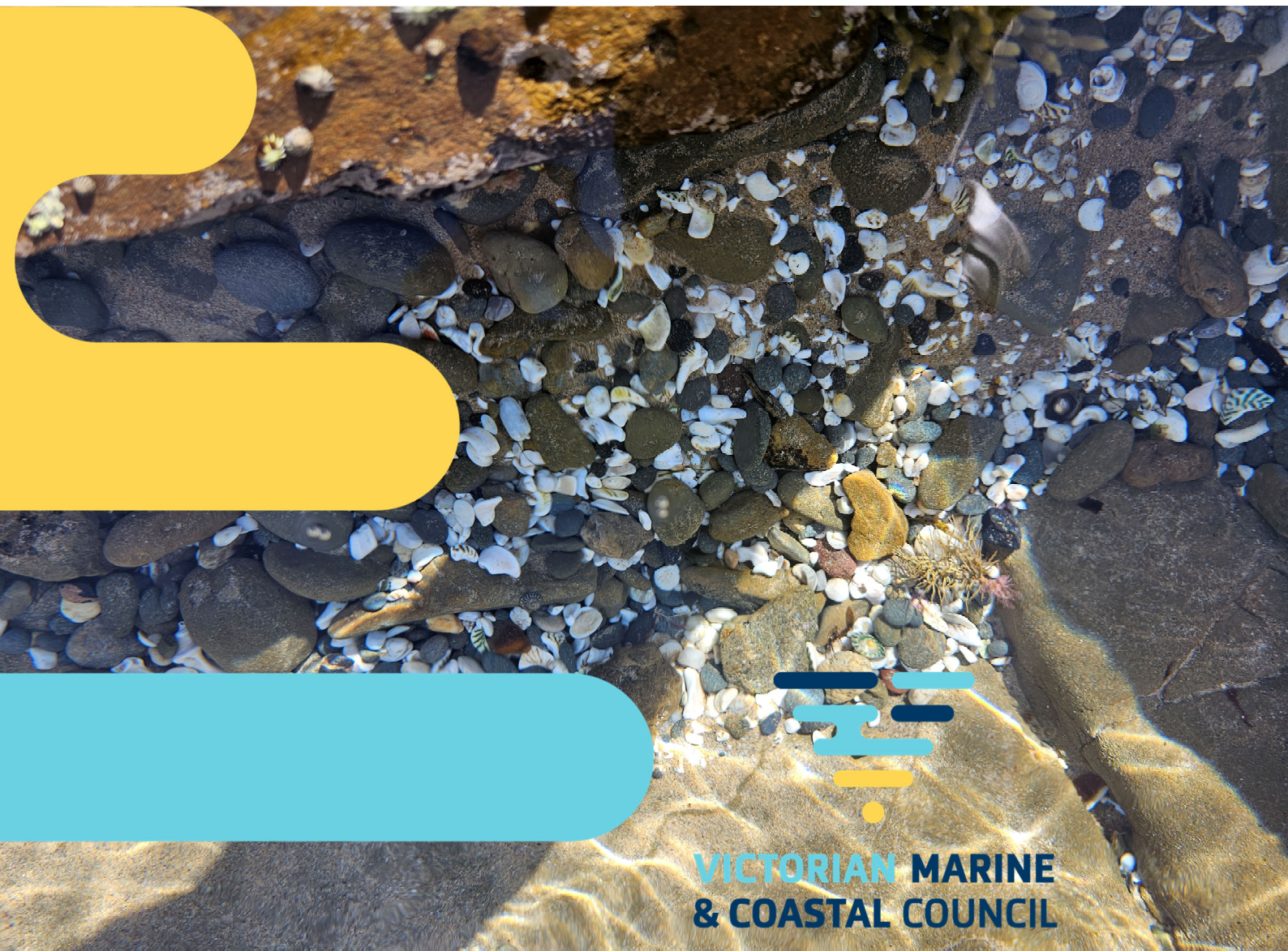


Victorian Marine and Coastal Council

Annual Report 2022–23



**VICTORIAN MARINE
& COASTAL COUNCIL**



Prepared by the Victorian Marine & Coastal Council
8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002

October 2023

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and Climate Action Melbourne 2022

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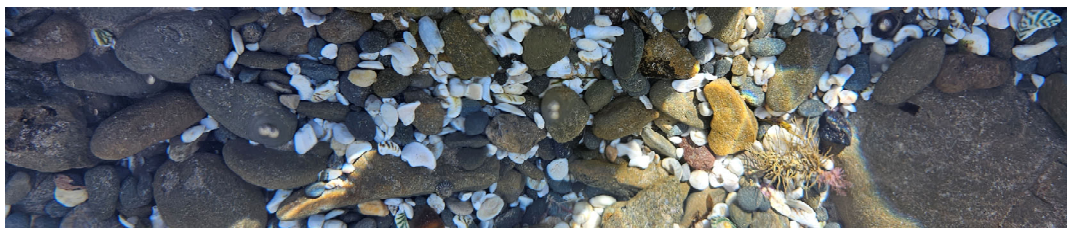
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Photo acknowledgements

Contact Victorian Marine & Coastal Council Secretariat for further information.



We acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners and their Elders past and present as the Original Custodians of Victoria's land and waters and commit to genuinely partnering with them and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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Responsible body declaration

In accordance with the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* I am pleased to present the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Annual Report for the reporting period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.



Anthony Boxshall PhD BSc GAICD
Chairperson, Marine and Coastal Council
30 June 2023



Point Nepean (Franzi Taylor)

Chair's foreword

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (VMaCC or the Council) is appointed under the Marine and Coastal Act 2018 (the Act) to advise the Minister for Environment and the Secretary to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) on a range of matters relating to the marine and coastal environment in Victoria.

The Council consists of eight members with expertise across a broad range of complementary disciplines. Council members have skills and experience in marine and coastal environments, planning, law, the physical sciences, policy, engagement, state and local Government, ecological sciences, catchment management, fisheries and more. Over 2022-23, Council membership has included two members with First Nations backgrounds.

Our purpose is to provide evidence and stakeholder-informed advice to encourage and enable leadership in the adaptive planning and management of Victoria's marine waters and coastal areas. This year marked the fifth year of VMaCC's term. Despite the enduring legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic on our operating environment, Council has slowly begun to reinstate in-person stakeholder engagement and meetings, and we have adapted hybrid arrangements into our usual business.

With the trifecta of the Act, the Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 (the Policy) and the Marine and Coastal Strategy 2022 (the Strategy) underway, 2022-23 has presented an exciting implementation phase of marine and coastal reform.

In parallel with the release of the Strategy, the Council has developed a new business plan, published in the second half of 2022. The new plan will guide the Council's efforts to 2024, and focusses on implementing the marine and coastal reforms set out in the Act, the Policy and the Strategy.

Our key achievement for 2022-23 was the finalisation of our project exploring *'Economic Impacts from Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge in Victoria, Australia over the 21st century'*. In addition to completion of the full report led by Professor Tom Kompas (University of Melbourne), Council also produced a plain English General Summary to assist with the communication of the complexities of the findings. The project, commissioned in partnership with Life Saving Victoria, was on the cusp of public release at the end of the financial year.

VMaCC strengthened our work with our Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) to draw upon the extraordinary depth of experience and knowledge from academics and experts across Australia, strengthening our capacity to provide leading edge, evidence-based advice. Council sought and consolidated feedback from the EAP to ensure that this expertise is captured and utilised in the most appropriate ways.

The Council also advised DEECA on the development of other tools and guidance under the Act including Marine Spatial Planning Guidelines and Marine Planning Areas, Coastal and Marine Management Planning Guidelines, Victoria's Resilient Coast Guidelines, Guidelines for the management of existing bathing boxes and boatsheds on marine and coastal Crown land and high-level planning considerations for the development of a proposed offshore windfarm industry.

The Council continued to contribute to initiatives including the National Marine Science Committee, and the associated Integrated Ecosystem Assessment National Pilot.

As always, we continued to build on our stakeholder relationships through engaging stakeholders directly in planning and policy.

The Council is proud of achievements to this point with members working effectively to set a foundation for excellence and innovation in marine and coastal planning and management. We are excited by the prospect of continuing collaboration with communities and stakeholders to deliver the Strategy.

Throughout our work, we are deeply committed to the recognition of Traditional Owners and their journey towards self-determination, broad and deep ongoing stakeholder engagement, and making decisions that are underpinned by the best available science.



South Gippsland (Jennifer Fraser)

1 Year in review

1.1 Fifth year

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council is the state's peak advisory body for coastal and marine issues. It is established under the Act to provide independent advice on marine and coastal issues to the responsible Minister. The responsible Minister was

- from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022 the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Action.
- from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023 the Hon Ingrid Stitt MP, Minister for Environment.

	Member new or continuing	Period of appointment
Ms Marianne Atkinson	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024
Dr Anthony Boxshall (Chair)	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024
Ms Jennifer Fraser	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2023
Dr Anna Grage	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024
Dr Rohan Henry	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024* *formally resigned 6 April 2023
Dr Ian Knuckey	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2023
Prof Alistar Robertson	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2023
Dr John Sherwood	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2023
Ms Jacquie White (Deputy Chair)	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024

Over the year the Council has continued to work closely with policy makers, rights holders and stakeholders to build on the reform agenda established under the Act for a co-ordinated approach to the planning and management of Victoria's marine and coastal environment.

The Council continued to place particular emphasis on leadership through a rigorous, equitable and inclusive approach to gathering and disseminating information and on providing for stakeholder views to be heard and integrated.

In particular, Council has emphasised:

- evidence-based research and advice
- the embedding of Traditional Owner groups in policy and planning partnerships
- engaging with stakeholders through continuing consultation and direct reporting
- identifying and prioritising current and emerging issues and opportunities

Council continued to engage and lead input into the marine and coastal reform process set up under the Act, by providing considered and expert advice; through its research initiatives; and through providing a conduit for Traditional Owners and stakeholder voices.

1.2 Purpose and function

Section 16 of the Act outlines Council's functions and accountabilities in relation to the Responsible Minister. Council has continued to prioritise, and work closely with DEECA, throughout the finalisation of the state-wide Strategy and on providing guidance and strategic advice to the Minister on matters requiring scientific research.

1.3 Advice to the Minister

Council maintained an active advisory role both in responding to requests for information and through raising topics of importance, despite the enduring challenges of the pandemic.

Council provided advice to the Minister throughout 2022-23 in a number of areas:

- 'The economics of damages and the cost of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate impacts' project updates (due to be released in July 2023).
- Emphasising the importance of State leadership on marine and coastal issues and of empowering land managers with the confidence to lead decisions on complex issues.

Indirect advice to the Minister occurred through advice to DEECA leadership covering several topics:

- Advice to assist the implementation of the Marine and Coastal Strategy
- Contributions to the draft Coastal and Marine Management Plan Guidelines
- Contributions to the ongoing implementation of the Marine Spatial Planning Framework and associated guidance for Marine Spatial Planning
- Contributions to the Victoria's Resilient Coast Guidelines
- Contributions to guidelines for the management of existing bathing boxes and boatsheds; and
- High level advice regarding planning considerations for the development of a proposed offshore windfarm industry in Victoria, and the potential opportunities provided by the Marine Spatial Planning Framework in the Marine and Coastal Policy to assist with large scale multi-sectoral planning.

1.4 Highlights/performance against functions

1.4.1 Traditional Owner partnerships

Since its inception, the Council has been committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully empower Victoria's diverse Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and achieve their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

During this term, the Minister appointed two members with a First Nations background to Council, broadening the diversity of experience and perspectives in the Council. New members also added vital additional expertise to Council across the areas of environmental governance, aquatic science, small business, and the application of policy and regulation. The Council continues to support broader Traditional Owner inclusion and self-determination in marine and coastal planning and management.

1.4.2 Implementing the Marine and Coastal Strategy

The Council has continued to focus on implementation of the Strategy as a key tool in progressing the reform agenda of the Act.

VMaCC continued to use stakeholder informed and evidence based advice to influence and support the implementation of the Strategy. The final documents include a range of actions for stakeholder collaboration aligned with objectives of the Policy and Act, with a strong focus on Traditional Owner guidance as well as adapting to climate change and associated sea level rise, storms and erosion.

Implementation of the Strategy has been an ongoing

opportunity to strengthen Traditional Owner and stakeholder participation in marine and coastal planning by building and integrating robust collaborative relationships into the process.

1.4.3 Research and evidence Base

Under the Act, the Council can advise the Minister on research needs and gaps. Chaired by Council member, Professor Alistar Robertson, the multi-disciplinary Expert Advisory Panel supports the Council to provide independent, evidence-based and credible scientific advice with an environmental, social, and economic 'whole of coastal and marine' perspective. During this term the following research, projects and advice were either commissioned or delivered:

- ***Economic Impacts from Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge in Victoria, Australia over the 21st century.*** This study led by the University of Melbourne, was commissioned by Council in partnership with Lifesaving Victoria and with support from DEECA in 2021. The study is investigating and modelling the costs of projected climate change damages on coastal communities and assets and will consider the relative costs of investment in adaptation measures to avoid or mitigate these impacts. Research, modelling and drafted of the report was advanced, with a further body of work developed to ensure the necessarily complex economics can be understood by a non-economist audience. The work will be published in July 2023. Council considers this a critically important project that will enable the provision of robust, evidence-based and costed advice to the Victorian Government and community on preparing for sea-level rise (SLR). Work is ongoing and the intention is to release the report publicly following work across Government to understand the implications of the findings for Victorians.
- **State of the Marine and Coast Reporting.** The report was published by the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability in December 2021. VMaCC together with members of the Expert Advisory Panel previously assisted with the development of Marine Indicators. The VMaCC Chair is a member of the Commissioners Reference Group, with Councillor Dr Rohan Henry also serving as an independent expert on the Reference Group. Under section 37 of the Act, a State of the Marine and Coastal Environment (SMCE) Report is required within 5 years of making a Marine and Coastal Policy.
- The Council also wrote a letter of support for a proposal to develop a Blue Carbon Centre of Excellence led by Professor Peter Macreadie of Deakin University.

1.4.4 Stakeholder informed

The Council continued to use stakeholder insights from this year and previous extensive workshops with stakeholders from across the marine and coastal sector. One of this Council's signature commitments has been enabling the voice of stakeholders to be heard in marine and coastal planning and management both through the development of the Strategy, and through ongoing advocacy.



Altona Beach (Franzi Taylor)

1.4.5 Highlights against Council functions

Section 16 of the Act includes 11 functions of the Council. These functions are outlined below including a high-level summary of deliverables against each from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Functions	Deliverable
<p><i>Function (a) and (b)</i> Marine and Coastal Policy and Marine and Coastal Strategy development and implementation</p>	<p>The Council worked closely with DEECA in finalising the Marine and Coastal Strategy 2022 (see section 1.1.2).</p> <p>A continuing focus was inclusion of Traditional Owners in the development of the Strategy as well as facilitating a stakeholder-informed process.</p>
<p><i>Function (c)</i> Provide advice to the Minister on significant decisions under the Act</p>	<p>Council maintained and consolidated its strong relationship with the Minister by providing advice on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ climate change and associated storm surge and sea level rise ▪ leadership and management on marine and coastal issues
<p><i>Function (d)</i> Matters requiring scientific research</p>	<p>The Council worked with members of the multi-disciplinary Expert Advisory Panel) to develop and deliver projects as part of priority focus areas (see section 1.4.4).</p> <p>A key project that was finalised was the report titled: <i>Economic Impacts from Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge in Victoria, Australia over the 21st century</i>.</p> <p>The Council members have a strong skill base and are involved in several state and national science committees including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Marine Science Committee (NMSC) ▪ Senior Stakeholder Advisory Committee on Nature Based Coastal Defence ▪ Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (OCES) Stakeholder Reference Group ▪ Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan's (PPB EMP) annual Senior Agency Reference Group (SARG) ▪ Integrated Marine Observing System – Victoria (VIC IMOS) ▪ A national pilot of the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment approach (a priority action of the National Marine Science Strategy led by the NMSC).
<p><i>Function (e)</i> Provide advice on guidelines prepared under the Act</p>	<p>Council provided advice on preparing the following draft guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coastal and Marine Management Plan guidelines ▪ Victoria's Resilient Coast guidelines ▪ Guidelines for the management of existing bathing boxes and boatsheds on marine and coastal Crown land ▪ Marine Spatial Planning guidelines and marine planning areas
<p><i>Function (f) and (g)</i> Request the Minister establish Regional and Strategic Partnerships (RaSP) & provide advice to participants</p>	<p>Council liaised with the Inverloch RaSP (known as the Cape to Cape resilience project) and provided advice to DEECA regarding the proposed Western Shoreline of Port Phillip Bay RaSP. Council strongly advocated developing RaSP guidelines to guide these partnerships.</p> <p>The Minister did not seek VMaCC advice regarding establishing any other RaSPs, nor did VMaCC make any suggestions to Minister regarding further RaSPs during the year.</p>
<p><i>Function (h)</i> Provide input to the preparation of Environmental Management Plans under the Act</p>	<p>The Council will provide input into preparing Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) as required. Currently the Port Phillip Bay EMP is the only EMP under the Act. The Council is a member of the Port Phillip Bay EMP Senior Agency Reference Group providing advice (as required) on the priorities and emerging issues and/or risks that may impact implementation.</p>

<p><i>Function (i)</i></p> <p>Matters relating to or affecting the administration of the Act</p>	<p>Supporting the preparation of the Marine and Coastal Strategy as a key document to assist in the administration of the Act has been the focus for the Council over the past year.</p> <p>In this year, Council had no requirement to draw the Minister’s attention to any specific matters relating to, or affecting, the administration of the Act.</p>
<p><i>Function (j)</i></p> <p>Carry out any other function conferred on Council by or under the Act or any other Act</p>	<p>The Act is complemented by the Marine and Coastal Policy and the Marine and Coastal Strategy which identify a program of reforms and on-the-ground actions over the coming years. The Policy and Strategy reflect the objectives and guiding principles set under the Act.</p> <p>The Council has an oversight and advocacy role in ensuring these reforms and actions are carried out, and to effectively engage and enable Traditional Owner voices, stakeholders and the community.</p>
<p>(2) In performing its functions Council must have regard to principles and objectives of the Act.</p>	<p>The Council vision is aligned with that of the Policy: for a healthy marine and coastal environment now and, in the future, which is to be achieved by giving effect to the principles and objectives of the Act. The principles are used as the framework for decision-making for the Victorian marine and coastal environment within the Marine and Coastal Policy (DEECA, 2020).</p> <p>The objectives of the Act relate to planning and management of the marine and coastal environment. They define rights and aspirations, and set measures and arrangements designed to ensure these are met. Council always considers the principles and objectives of the Act in its decisions, activities and advice.</p>



VMaCC RaSP discussion, Inverloch (Anthony Boxshall)

1.4.6 Presentations given, and workshop contributions, by Council members and staff

Council members and staff gave the following presentations and contributed to workshops and panel discussions shown in the table below.

Presenter	Presented to	Topic	Date
Dr Boxshall	Vic Resilient Coast - Collaborative Working Group	Vic Resilient Coast - Collaborative Working Group session #7 and program launch	13 July 2022
Dr Boxshall	East Gippsland Shire Council and Bass Coast Shire Council	Coastal Management - what matters at the Local Government coalface. (Traditional Owner perspective; Who is VMaCC & what is the Marine and Coastal Act? Marine - How we work + examples; What does our community think?)	3 August 2022
Dr Boxshall	Students at Swinburne University of Technology	Guest speaker for online lecture in science communication unit with the topic of "Communication with policy makers" (Swinburne University of Technology)	5 September 2022
Dr Boxshall	Gippsland Traditional Owner Sea Ranger Program attendees	Gippsland Traditional Owner Sea Ranger Program	13 September 2022
Dr Boxshall	Members of the Marine and Coastal Strategy Implementation Collaboration Network	Marine and Coastal Strategy Implementation Collaboration Network launch	4 October 2022
Dr Boxshall	Victoria's Resilient Coast community of practice & networks	Victoria's Resilient Coast – Adapting for 2100+ pilot projects showcase	6 October 2022
VMaCC	Victorian Coastal Councils	Victorian Coastal Councils Event: Victoria's Digital Twin - application in coastal planning and management (Association of Bayside Municipalities event)	18 October 2022
Dr Boxshall	Coastal Programs Project Control Board	Presentation on draft report: <i>Economic Impacts from Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge in Victoria, Australia over the 21st century</i>	12 April 2023
Dr Boxshall Ms White Dr Grage Ms Atkinson Ms Fraser	Key RaSP stakeholders	Cape to Cape Resilience Plan Workshop with RaSP PCB, PWG & VMaCC	22 May 2023

1.4.7 General Business activities

The Council business activities involved:

- advising and meeting with the office of the former Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and the Minister for Environment
- providing considered feedback and input to the finalisation of the Marine and Coastal Strategy
- supporting DEECA in public consultation sessions as part of the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy
- partnering with Traditional Owners in the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy by joint participation in Strategy development sessions with DEECA
- engaging with Traditional Owners to understand healthy Country objectives and how best to embed a Traditional Owner voice in Council business.
- engaging with stakeholders and partners through forums, working groups and meetings
- engaging the members for involvement in Council priority projects
- progressing and finalising Council priority projects including
 - the *'Economics of damages and the costs of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts'* together with preparation of a comprehensive summary report that includes VMaCC recommendations.
- responding to local government councils with comments on draft Coastal and Marine Management Plans
- providing feedback to DEECA and lead agencies on preparing and developing the following draft Guidelines:
 - Coastal and Marine Management Plan guidelines
 - Victoria's Resilient Coast guidelines
 - Marine Spatial Planning Guidelines and planning areas
 - Guidelines for the management of existing bathing boxes and boatsheds on marine and coastal Crown land

1.4.8 Council Business Plan

The Council developed the Strategic Business Plan 2022-24 which provides the vision and strategic direction for Council activities. A copy of the existing business plan can be found online at:

[Microsoft Word - CS-000773 2022-24 Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Business Plan.docx](#)

Priorities outlined in the Business Plan continued to reflect the functions of Council as outlined in the Act, key issues, outcomes, and responses to emerging challenges. It remained relevant into 2022/23 as its key activities included the finalisation of the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy.

COVID-19 Adjustment Statement

The constraints of COVIDSafe settings required continuation of an agile and flexible approach to enable the operation of the Council and, in particular, to ensure the access and input of stakeholders into the development of the Strategy. During the last year, Council continued to adapt its timetable to facilitate stakeholder engagement to maximise safety and connection while maintaining a high standard of service delivery.



Paynesville, Jennifer Fraser.

2. Governance and organisational structure

The Council is resourced with a budget and Secretariat support through DEECA. On 30 June 2023 the Council was supported by 2 staff (1.4 full time equivalent).

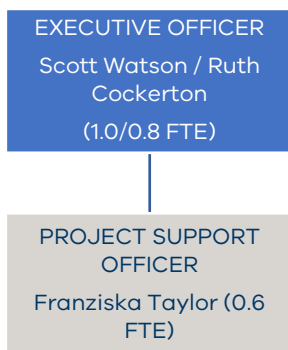


Figure 1: Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Secretariat Organisational Structure

The Council's office is located at 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne Victoria 3002.

The postal address for the Council is PO Box 500, East Melbourne Victoria 8002.

Telephone: 9637 8893

Email: vmacc@delwp.vic.gov.au

Website: www.marineandcoastalcoouncil.vic.gov.au

2.1 Council membership

Appointments to the Council are made under the provisions of the Act by the Minister for Environment. Both professional experience and capacity in networking and stakeholder engagement were key considerations in appointing the Council. This resulted in a high calibre membership whose expertise covers a broad range of marine and coastal disciplines. This expertise, combined with stakeholder-informed evidence gathered by Council, provides a base for advice to the Ministers responsible for Victoria's marine and coastal environments. Brief biographies of current Council members follow.

Members of the Council were appointed on 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2023 (J. Fraser, I. Knuckey, A. Robertson and J. Sherwood) and to 31 July 2024 (A. Boxshall, M. Atkinson, A. Grage, R. Henry, J. White) include:

(Chairperson)

Dr Anthony Boxshall is a marine ecologist who has worked in Australia and the USA across Government, academia and private industry. He is the Founder and Principal of Science into Action Pty Ltd, a science impact company turning great science into greater actions. He is a Board Director of Parks Victoria and



was the valedictory Chair of the Victorian Coastal Council. A former National President of the Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA – the largest learned society for professional marine scientists in Australia), he has worked at UC Santa Cruz USA, Deakin University, and has been on several innovation Boards. A current Melbourne Enterprise Fellow in the School of Biosciences at the University of Melbourne, he ran the Science area at the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in Victoria for nearly a decade.

As a hobby, he has communicated the wonders of the marine and coastal environment to a broad audience through the award-winning "Radio Marinara" on 3RRR-FM in Melbourne for more than 27 years. He is a dad to 4 children who continually amaze, inspire, frustrate and leave him in awe of the potential of the future and hence more determined to leave a positive coastal and marine legacy.

Ms Jacquie White (Deputy Chair)

has over 20 years experience working in the environment sector across coastal management, catchment management, integrated water management, community and stakeholder engagement, organisational change and capacity building, and social research and evaluation. She is currently the



Executive Officer of the Association of Bayside Municipalities and runs a consultancy providing event management and stakeholder engagement services.

Jacquie's previous professional roles include: General Manager of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, Manager Community Programs at Melbourne Water, Director at the Office of Living Victoria, and Manager of Organisational Transformation with the Country Fire Authority.

Ms Marianne Atkinson's professional working history capturing and stems the area of Government, Human Services, Education & Training, Family Violence Policy, Systems & Reform, Aboriginal Affairs, and community organisations. Is expert in developing policy and strategy, providing advice to government, regional and strategic partnerships. Working with community members as well as levels of professionals to codesign and develop effective processes for the evaluation and validation of programs, systems, and structures. She has broad experience leading, coordination and liaising with community groups and preparing and facilitating state-wide strategies in response to community needs, working towards improving outcomes to adapt new practices and system of change progressing ideas and transforming thoughts into action driven solutions. Ms Atkinson is currently employed at RMIT University Melbourne in a part-time casual role as VE Tutor Diploma of Community Services. Her fields of study include Business, Business Analytics, Education, and Data Analysis. She is currently the Co-Chairperson Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group (National representatives), Australian War Memorial and the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management.



Ms Jennifer Fraser has several governance and advisory roles. In addition to membership of the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council, she is a Commissioner with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder. Previously she was a board member of the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, a sessional member of Planning Panels Victoria, a member then Chair of the Medley Hall Council at the University of Melbourne and a member of the board of Westside Community Circus. She has consulted to different levels of government and has 20 years policy, legislative and management experience across the Victorian public sector. In addition to a range of senior water and natural resource management roles within the (then) Department of Sustainability and Environment, Jennifer has worked in the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Health, and Education. Jennifer has qualifications in Geography and Law and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Jennifer has worked in the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Health, and Education. Jennifer has



qualifications in Geography and Law and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors

Dr Anna Grage has a background in marine environmental law and planning, and statutory (urban/environmental) planning. She has a Bachelor of Laws, a Bachelor of Planning and Design (Hons), and a PhD (University of Wollongong) that focuses on Australian legal frameworks for marine environmental impact assessment. In the past, Anna has worked as a lecturer at the Australian Maritime College/University of Tasmania, teaching in the areas of international ocean governance, environmental advocacy, and marine environmental and fisheries law and policy.



Anna has also worked in Victoria and Western Australia as a statutory planner for local government, and as a solicitor in the areas of planning and environmental law; with her most recent local government role being with Mornington Peninsula Shire. Anna is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Adelaide, is on the Deakin University Environmental Science Advisory Board, Principal Consultant of Earth-Sea Planning, and a volunteer for the Sea Search (Parks Victoria) program/Friends of Mushroom Reef Marine Sanctuary, and the Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

Dr Rohan Henry is an experienced project manager with over 20 years working extensively in the environmental sector, in the areas of policy development and environmental impact assessments and approvals. He's a skilled Indigenous engagement adviser with significant experience collaborating and partnering with Traditional Owner Corporations and their communities. He possesses a unique understanding of water, marine and coastal-related policy, programs and approvals and the critical interactions these have with Traditional Owner groups and their communities.



Rohan continues to practice as an independent consultant working across water, renewable energy, and fisheries sectors in both Victoria and NSW.

Rohan is a currently a Non-Executive Director, South East Water Corporation; Non-Executive Director, One Basin CRC; Deputy Chair, Committee on Aboriginal Water Interests (DCCEEW); Chair, Maribyrnong

Integrated Water Management Forum; Member, Independent Panel for the Central Region & Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy; Independent Member, Project Control Group, Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project; and member, Victorian Marine and Coastal Council.

Rohan has a PhD in marine and coastal ecology and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Dr Henry resigned from VMaCC on 6 April 2023.

Dr Ian Knuckey is the Director of Fishwell Consulting, a company that provides expert research advice and consulting services to encourage and promote sustainable fishing practices. He has a PhD in fisheries population dynamics, a BSc (Hons) in Marine Ecology and over 25 years of experience in temperate and tropical fisheries research and management, encompassing a wide variety of invertebrate, finfish and shark fisheries.



Ian has worked with many fisheries around Australia and in South-east Asia, providing research advice and running various fishery-independent surveys, monitoring programs and bycatch reduction projects. More recently, he has been leading capacity building programs to ensure Indigenous, recreational and commercial fishers can have greater understanding and input into fisheries research and management.

Professor Emeritus Alistar Robertson has had extensive field research experience as a marine and freshwater ecologist in Victoria, NSW, Queensland, Western Australia, Canada, USA, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. He has worked in universities and research agencies in Australia, Canada and the USA. At the Australian Institute of Marine Science, he was Senior Principal



Research Scientist and leader of the Coastal Processes and Resources Program. At the University of Western Australia, he was Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences and then Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) before retiring in 2013.

Awards have recognised his commitment to multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches to research on marine and coastal research and the translation of that research into action. He has been a member of many state, national and international committees providing advice on the management of terrestrial, marine, coastal and catchment habitats in the face of local and global change. He also provides advice to universities and government agencies on research, research collaborations and research impact.

Honorary Associate Professor John Sherwood

holds qualifications in science, education and environmental studies, with extensive experience as a research scientist in freshwater, marine and estuarine systems and environmental management. He is Honorary Associate Professor in the School of Life and Environmental Sciences at Deakin University in Warrnambool. John is chair of the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority's Coast and Marine Working Group, an informal advisory and networking group for agencies and local government.



John has chaired the former Fisheries Co-management Council, served as National President of the Australian Marine Sciences Association and has been a member of the Western Coastal Board and the Victorian National Parks Advisory Council. John was recognised as Warrnambool City Council's 2017 Citizen of the Year and holds a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Victorian Coastal Council.

2.2 Council Meetings

VMaCC held 8 meetings on the following dates throughout 2022-23 as follows:

- 1 August 2022
- 12 September 2022
- 7 November 2022
- 12 December 2022
- 13 February 2023
- 27 March 2023
- 8 May 2023
- 19 June 2023

Member attendance for the Council's 8 business meetings in 2022-23 are as follows:

▪ Dr Anthony Boxshall	8
▪ Ms Marianne Atkinson	6
▪ Ms Jennifer Fraser	8
▪ Dr Anna Grage	7
▪ Dr Rohan Henry	8
▪ Dr Ian Knuckey	7
▪ Dr John Sherwood	7
▪ Ms Jacquie White	8
▪ Prof Alistair Robertson	7

2.3 Representation on stakeholder reference groups

VMaCC membership on stakeholder reference groups in 2022-23 financial year was as follows:

- National Marine Science Committee – Dr Anthony Boxshall
- Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Reference Group – Dr Anthony Boxshall
- Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plans (PPB EMP) annual Senior Agency Reference Group – Jennifer Fraser
- VIC IMOS – Prof Alistair Roberson
- Our Catchments Our Communities – Strategic Reference Group – Jennifer Fraser

2.4 Council sub-committees

The Council members were involved in the following VMaCC committees to guide and progress strategic projects and activities:

- Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee (Chair: Jacquie White)
- Project Control Board for the report: *Economic Impacts from Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge in Victoria, Australia over the 21st century* (Chair: Anna Grage)
- Expert Advisory Panel Sub-Committee (Chair: Alistair Robertson)
- Working Group – South Gippsland VMaCC Meeting Planning (Chair: Jennifer Fraser).



Beach erosion, Raymond Island. Jennifer

2.5 Presentations received at VMaCC meetings

VMaCC received the following presentations at its meetings in 2022-23:

Presenter	Topic	Date
Great Ocean Road Coasts and Parks Authority (GORCAPA) (Jodie Sizer, Chief Executive Officer; Libby Mears, Chair; Leia Howes, Planning Manager; Patrick Corkery, Capital Works Manager)	Great Ocean Road Coasts and Parks Authority (GORCAPA)	7 November 2022
DELWP* (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Nicola Waldron, Manager PSU; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer; Jenny Symons, Senior Policy Officer)	Sea Level Rise Planning Benchmarks	13 February 2023
DEECA, (Cass Phillippou, Project Manager – Inverloch RaSP)	Inverloch RaSP	27 March 2023
DEECA (Elisa Zavadil, A/Manager Policy & Strategy Unit; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer)	CMMP Guidelines MERI Framework	19 June 2023

*Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning DELWP prior to transitioning to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).



Tarwin South Beach (Kate Dickenson)

2.6 Submissions by Council

There were no VMaCC submissions in 2022-23.

2.7 Council publications

2.8 Conferences and seminars

There was one conference attended by VMaCC members in 2022-23 - the National Coastal Hazards Forum 29-31 March 2023 in Perth, Western Australia was attended by Deputy Chair, Jacquie White.

2.9 Statement of pecuniary interests

All members of VMaCC and the Executive Officer have completed declarations of pecuniary interest for the current reporting period including details of shares held by members.

2.10 Performance

VMaCC scoped and commissioned an independent governance and performance review which was initiated this year and will be completed in the first quarter of 2023-24.

2.11 Risk management

While VMaCC examines the risks associated with the delivery of its work functions and objectives on an ongoing basis, it relies on DEECA's risk management

framework and internal audit of financial and other administrative systems used by VMaCC's Secretariat as outlined in the DEECA Annual Report.

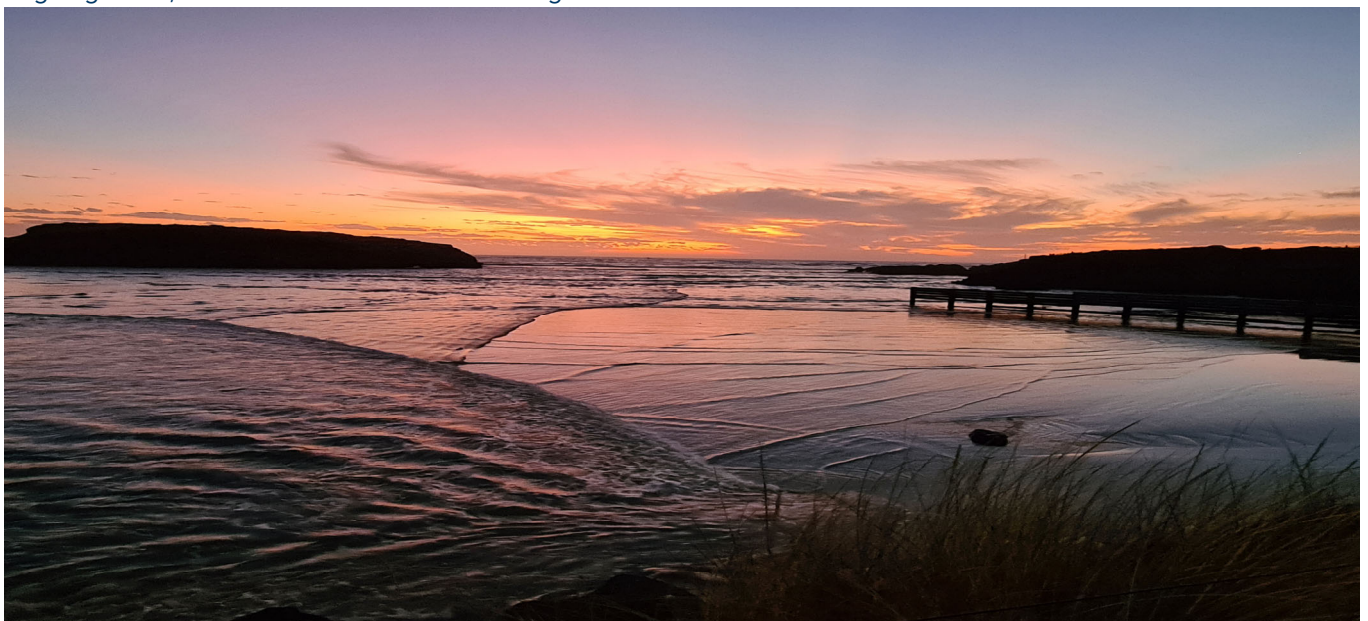
2.12 Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Operations are managed in accordance with DEECA procedures and guidelines for occupational health and safety, industrial relations, and related issues as outlined in the DEECA Annual Report.

2.13 Employment and conduct principles

The VMaCC uses DEECA processes. VMaCC and DEECA are committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing staff. The selection processes ensure applicants are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably based on the key selection criteria and other accountabilities without discrimination. Employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections.

Consistent with requirements of the *Public Administration Act 2004*, VMaCC has adopted a range of policies designed to promote good governance in all its decision making and operations. These policies comprise: Code of Conduct; Conflict of Interest; Dispute Resolution; Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality; Meetings and Decision Making; and Performance Assessment.



Sunset, Stingray Bay (John Sherwood)

3. Workforce data

3.1 Workforce Data

On 30 June 2023 VMaCC was supported by two staff (1.4 full time equivalent). Across the year, the proportion of women employed was 50 per cent until May 2023, and 100 per cent from May 2023.

3.2 Women, Youth and Indigenous Affairs

VMaCC is committed to involving Victoria's

community, including women, youth and Aboriginal Victorians in the management and enjoyment of the coast. The Act identifies actions to implement indigenous cultural outcomes and to improve communications with Aboriginal communities in coastal areas. VMaCC's Business Plan includes actions to strengthen community involvement in coastal planning and management and VMaCC operates in an environment that ensures equity of processes and participation by rights' holders and stakeholders.

4. Other disclosures

4.1 Freedom of Information (FOI)

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) allows the public a right of access to documents held by VMaCC. The purpose of the FOI Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers and other bodies subject to the FOI Act.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by VMaCC. This comprises documents both created by VMaCC or supplied to VMaCC by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, microfiche, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings and videotapes.

The FOI Act allows VMaCC to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include Cabinet documents; some internal working documents; law enforcement documents; documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice; personal information about other people; and information provided to Council in-confidence.

The FOI Act has been amended to reduce processing time for requests received to 30 days. However, when external consultation is required the processing time automatically reverts to 45 days. Processing time may also be extended by periods of 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. With the applicant's agreement this may occur a number of times.

If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision made by DEECA, under section 49A of the FOI Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

4.2 Making a request

VMaCC operates in accordance with FOI procedures established through DEECA. One FOI request was made to VMaCC in 2022-23.

VMaCC has determined that DEECA is its authorised officer. FOI requests can be lodged online at www.foi.vic.gov.au. An application fee of \$30.60 applies. Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large, and the search for material is time consuming. Access to documents can also be obtained by writing to the Department's Freedom of Information Unit, as detailed in section 17 of the FOI Act:

Manager FOI

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

PO Box 500 East Melbourne Victoria 3002

Email: foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au

Phone: (03) 7022 6530.

Further information about the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the FOI Act, regulations made under the FOI Act and foi.vic.gov.au.

4.3 Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (PID Act) enables people to make a disclosure about corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body. VMaCC is a public body for the purposes of the PID Act.

What is a public interest disclosure?

A public interest disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct or detrimental action by a public officer or a public body.

'Improper or corrupt conduct' involves substantial mismanagement of public resources, risk to public health or safety or the environment, or corruption.

'Detrimental action' is action taken against a person in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure.

How do I make a public interest disclosure?

You can make a public interest disclosure about VMaCC or its board members, officers or employees by contacting IBAC (details below).

VMaCC is not able to receive public interest

disclosures.

VMaCC has established procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure about VMaCC, its members, officers or employees. You can access VMaCC’s procedures on its website at:

www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/about-us/about-vmacc.

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria

Address: Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000.

Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001

Internet: www.ibac.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 735 135

Email: See the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

4.4 Office-based environmental impacts

VMaCC makes use of DEECA offices and facilities to

perform its functions and the reporting requirement of the office is met by DEECA. The VMaCC Secretariat participates fully in a range of environmental programs operating within DEECA.

4.5 Statement of Availability of Other Information

Other information held at VMaCC’s office is available on request, subject to the FOI Act.

4.6 Compliance with Data Vic Access policy

Consistent with the Victorian Government’s DataVic Access policy, VMaCC intends that data tables which it may produce in the future will be available at:

<http://data.vic.gov.au/> in machine readable format.

4.7 Overseas travel

There was no overseas travel by VMaCC members for VMaCC purposes in 2022-23.



Weedy sea dragon (Ian Knuckey)

5. Council expenditure

5.1 Expenditure and financial management

VMaCC’s operating budget is provided within the budget of DEECA. Financial operations of VMaCC have not been separately audited. Audited statements are incorporated into the overall financial statements of the DEECA Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2023. It is considered unnecessary for VMaCC to retain

a separate audit committee.

DEECA undertakes an annual assessment of financial management compliance with all applicable requirements in the *Financial Management Act 1994*, Standing Directions and Instructions. This includes the financial management of VMaCC’s activities. DEECA also periodically audits this compliance.

The following table shows the operating expenditure of

the Council for the 2022-23 financial year (excluding salaries and agency staff costs) and provides a comparison with the previous year. Costs were less overall due in part to online meetings and a smaller number of projects.

5.2 Operating position

Summary of Financial Results of the Year

Financial Year	Council operations*
2022-23	\$122,533.2
2021-22	\$193,962**

* Includes all members' sitting fees, reimbursements, payroll tax, superannuation contribution, WorkCover levy, secretariat expenses, training, and items such as annual report, consultants and events.

**In the annual report period for 2021-22, VMaCC expended \$193,962 on council operations. This was

reported as \$216,682 due to a clerical error

5.2.1 Consultancy expenditure

VMaCC expended \$40,425 during the 2022-23 on consultancy projects; including expert advice and review of the project: *Economic Impacts from Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge in Victoria, Australia over the 21st century*; facilitation services; science communication services.

In the annual report period for 2021-22, VMaCC expended \$19,933 on consultancy projects including expert advice and science communication. This was omitted from the 2021-22 Annual Report due to a clerical error.

5.2.2 Government advertising

Nil



VMaCC with PV rangers at Anglesea cliffs (Franzi Taylor)

6. Abbreviations and Acronyms

DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
FOI	Freedom of Information
IBAC	Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission
IPCC	United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
OCES	Office for the Commissioner of Environmental Sustainability
PPB EMP	Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan
RaSP	Regional and Strategic Partnership
SRG	Stakeholder Reference Group
SMCE	State of the Marine and Coastal Environment
VIC IMOS	Victoria Integrated Marine Observing System



Anglesea Beach (Franzi Taylor)